

142

The Dubliner

EDITED BY DONALD CARROLL

VOLUME 1

Number One

November-December, 1961

Reprinted 1971 for
Wm. DAWSON & SONS LTD., LONDON
with the permission of
NEW SQUARE PUBLICATIONS LTD., DUBLIN

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Editorial

IN RECENT INTRODUCTORY EDITORIALS, the editors of two literary magazines (one English and one American) proclaimed their new publications to be, respectively, "the one gamble really worth taking" and "a risk well worth assuming". Looking further, one is rather surprised to find most new entries in the world of periodical letters bearing a similar "Fragile" stamp. But unfortunately we are never told precisely what the risk or gamble is, except that it is indubitably there spoiling things for everyone. There is, of course, the risk of immediate extinction, but it is a risk we all face from the moment we are born and it does us little good to be reminded of it. Every adult is expected to take certain precautionary measures to prevent what we call, in a remarkable phrase, "an untimely death", whether it is his own or that of an enterprise for which he is responsible. Beyond that we must ignore the threat of history. In these editorials the only real risk which I am able to infer is the risk of doing what is already being done, and doing it less well.

This is a sizable risk, and the only way I see of triumphing over it completely is by surrendering to it completely — that is, by broadening the scope of the magazine to include the especial quality of each of as many other magazines as possible. In one sense editing is as creative as writing: the writer works not towards a new language, but towards a new configuration which makes the most of the language he has; likewise the competent editor does not bother to wait for the entirely original contribution (it is

invariably bad when it arrives), instead he arranges the best of what is available in such a fashion that it will appeal to the taste of the reader he is aiming at. *The Dubliner* is designed for an eclectic taste or, more hopefully, for a wide range of special tastes. It will be something of a clearing-house for articles both of limited and of general belletristic interest. There will be poems in each issue and probably one or more pieces on the theatre and its practitioners. However, the only predetermined "regulars" will be the book reviews and 'Observation Deck', a cowardly but perhaps slightly more readable substitute for an editorial.

It should be clear by now that I am prepared to leave consistency, either in subject matter or in the treatment it receives, to the editors of other magazines. What I shall attempt to achieve is a certain *continuity* based on the simultaneous presentation of the work of Irish, British, and American writers and critics. Ever since the Irish and the Americans renovated England's language men of letters on both sides of the ocean have taken a lively interest in each other's work, and there have been a number of successful transplants during the past year alone. The surface has been scratched. But there remains in each country an appalling ignorance of creative and critical activity in the other English-speaking countries. It is my hope that *The Dubliner* will be able to contribute to a greater awareness and appreciation of that activity.

D.C.

"MAURICE GUEST"

A. Norman Jeffares

I

Maurice Guest (1908) is Henry Handel Richardson's first novel. It has been described as a musical novel but though it describes the life of the musicians and students who surrounded the Leipzig Conservatorium at the beginning of this century, music is not its main preoccupation. And though it has all the precise detail of a closely observed setting it is not merely a record of Henry Handel Richardson's experience in that city. Its scope is larger than this, and in many ways it is a more interesting novel than her others. *The Getting of Wisdom* (1910) we remember for its sensitivity and clarity of outline ; *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* (1930) for its vast sweep of Australian life and history combined with the story of one man's triumphs and failures and his final defeat by illness. The theme of this novel is exile and failure (Richard Mahoney was an Anglo-Irishman, a Dubliner educated in Edinburgh, unable to understand himself or his penelopean wife, for he had no Ithaca). *Maurice Guest* also unfolds a long story of failure ; it also shares in the presentation of an exile's life ; but its significance is different. Powerful, indeed at times passionate, this early twentieth century urban novel has a steely objectivity which aligns it with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, even more with *Ulysses*, and with the early poetry of Eliot.

Maurice Guest has its flaws — it is too long, its direction appears at times to be inconsistent, the technique is often crude — but, despite these, the handling of theme, scope and scene command our respect and admiration.

Its protagonists are exiles in Leipzig. Here is a Sargasso sea of music wherein they drift a time in proximity, some to escape, some to sink. None of them wish to stay long there ; indeed it is a sign of Maurice Guest's degeneration that at one stage of the story he envisages the prospect of doing so. They are exiles, but exiles for a time. They have chosen exile temporarily to equip themselves for life. They are in Leipzig to get their musical training from the professional teachers of music, equally to get their food and shelter from the professional landladies of the city. They are young, discovering themselves as well as their talents. They have challenged life and the novel examines the challenge life presents to them in turn, the problem of sex : not sex *per se*, but sex as it fits into the changing patterns of their lives, patterns which depend upon their varying ability to realise their ambitions of becoming artists.

Maurice Guest, however, is not merely a study of sexual selection at work among the artists. It presents a serious study of the moral problems sex creates for those who are at the mercy of developing talents and attempts to relate these moral problems to the workings of life itself.

The plot achieves this end by involving seven characters with one another. The story concerns itself with their shifting inter-relationships as a background to the central relationships of Maurice Guest with Louise Dufrayer and Shilsky. It is an exploration of a young man's awakening into knowledge of sexual life and love as he fails in his attempt to become an artist. Though he does not know it, he is a prig ; in part the story is an account of his gaining awareness of himself. His tragedy, however, lies as much in his moral disintegration as in his attempt to translate the world into his own language on his own terms, unaware of life outside his own dreaming. His ideals are strong and they blind him to reality.

To combine the dream and the reality is, however, the task of the novelist, and a possible reason why *Maurice Guest* has been neglected is that Henry Handel Richardson's technique was not sufficiently flexible for the task. She managed the realism well, with occasionally startling effectiveness—the drunken students' party in this novel is a masterpiece—but she did not always possess the technique for conveying the dreaming. Maurice Guest's constant introspective musing can become tedious at times because

she was better at describing his thoughts than bodying them in his own words ; her style could upon occasion become curiously stiff and clumsy when a freer and easier communication was needed. To generations suckled on Freud and weaned on Adler her interpolation of Maurice Guest's dreams can seem crude and even ineffective. And then Joyce has incorporated the walking of his characters in a known locale with more precision, more memorable success. Henry Handel Richardson uses the symbolic background of the woods and the seat in the park too obviously, and she returns to the musical side of the novel not so much as a contrapuntal nor as an harmonic device, but as a punctuation.

Despite these flaws (which arise because the new body of this novel is fitted to a conservatively designed chassis), *Maurice Guest* succeeds in sweeping our attention along more effectively than *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney*, though both novels seem to drag in their last third. The reason for the dragging of *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney* has been partially explained by the theory that his end is pathetic rather than tragic ; that he is overcome by the determinism of his fatal illness. There is something similar at work in *Maurice Guest*. Once Maurice has gone beyond a certain point his tragedy is complete, and we can sense a certain haste to be done with him. This point occurs in the second of the novel's three parts, hence the artistically unsatisfactory nature of the third, except to those who have accepted and wish to follow up Henry Handel Richardson's moral argument. This is implicit from the beginning. The novel, however, has such a passionate intensity behind even its most dragging episodes, its clumsiest repetitions and postponements, its most crude insistence on giving every detail in the history of the relationships without selection or impression or any other speeding device, that it contrives to hold us to the end. It is, ultimately, a work of compassion ; and this suits its subject, human passion.

Maurice Guest arrives in Leipzig full of ambition, of desire to work, to devote himself to music. He is emotionally unstable and very intense. This opening of the novel is characteristic of Henry Handel Richardson's technique. Maurice Guest experiences his vision of what his work in Leipzig will lead to ; he will dedicate his life to his art. He is an 'active brained dreamer.' He wanders through the town, his

impressions of it bearing the stamp of his enthusiastic mood ; he is delighted with Leipzig, then later that evening repulsed by it. The town seems less friendly, more aloof, as depression succeeds elation. He returns to his hotel bedroom ; he is a modern urban man alone in his room in the city, rent through by appalling loneliness. He writes to his parents that he will not waste a day of his time here : he means to succeed. He dreams a strange dream as he is to do later in the novel, at similar moments of crisis :

... Once more he was wandering through the streets, as he had done the previous day, apparently in search of something he could not find. But he did not know himself what he sought. All of a sudden, on turning a corner, he came upon a crowd of people gathered round some object in the road, and at once said to himself, this is it, here it is. He could not, however, see what it actually was, for the people, who were muttering to themselves in angry tones, strove to keep him back. At all costs, he felt, he must get nearer to the mysterious thing, and, in a spirit of bravado, he was pushing through the crowd to reach it, when a great clamour arose ; every one sprang back, and fled wildly, shrieking : " Moloch, Moloch ! " He did not know in the least what it meant, but the very strangeness of the word added to the horror, and he, too, fled with the rest : fled blindly, desperately, up streets and down, watched, it seemed to him, from every window by a cold, malignant eye, but never daring to turn his head, lest he should see the awful thing behind him ; fled on and on, through streets that grew ever vaguer and more shadowy, till at last his feet would carry him no further : he sank down, with a loud cry, sank down, down, down, and wakened to find that he was sitting up in bed, clammy with fear, and that dawn was stealing in at the sides of the window.

A fuller explanation of Maurice Guest's identity and aims is given in the second chapter of the novel. This is part of the technique used throughout : a mood, a situation, an event is sketched indirectly ; a later, detailed explanation follows. The aim is first to catch the reader's attention ; then through the explanations that follow to deepen understanding of the situation. We begin to realise how very romantic is the impulse which drives Maurice, how much he owes to the tale of an old musician in his home town about Germany's musicians and music schools, and how determined he is not to relapse into the grey anonymity of school teaching which has swallowed up his father — once a dreamer but now opposed to his son's dreams.

Maurice's nature is further illuminated for us by contrast with two characters who are later to receive ironic treatment — Dove, the ' know-all ' student described so accurately and acidly throughout the novel,

who 'knew all that went on, and the affairs of everybody, as though he went through life garnering in just those little facts that others were apt to overlook, and Madeleine Wade, Dove's counterpart, a very energetic girl ready with conventional phrases and advice, working hard within her limitations, who can fairly, and depressingly, say, 'I have never got up in the morning without having my whole day mapped and planned before me.'

Maurice lacks friends ; he has not met sympathetic understanding ; and so he blurts out his ideals to Madelaine Wade. He doesn't see the effect he produces ; in part, this is an attractive side to him ; he is natural. Yet on the other hand he is appallingly unsophisticated. He has come from a small town and is now faced with the problems of living alone in a city. He has been sheltered. The test begins when he sees Louise Dufrayer and, in one of the most lyric passages Henry Handel Richardson has allowed herself, falls immediately in love with her.

How is he fitted to cope with a love affair ? Charming though he is, he is eminently unprepared to fall in love with anyone sophisticated ; and Louise is eminently so. As we might have guessed, his idealism in the realm of music is matched by his idealism in love, Louise is different to other women, of course, for he has an ideal woman within his dreams, or at any rate he has already cut the pedestal for her from the purest marble of adoration. And both idealisms are doomed.

It is not merely a question of loving and adoring at the distance which seems natural at first ; much worse than that, he has to suffer almost at once the pangs of jealousy, for Louise appears to be very friendly with the Polish musician Shilsky. Maurice's peace of mind has gone. At first he vacillates between elation at being in love and despair at the prospects of attaining his lady. He heaps on Louise the spiritual perfections which answer to her appearance ; but even here he is foiled. He sees her meet the Pole and sees her face suffused with tenderness. There is no consolation ; even less when in his jealousy he begins to study the Pole and hears of his sordid life, and then of the scandal surrounding the two.

The elements of comedy are not far absent from the story in its first portion. Shilsky and his friends are treated with some amusement and their cavalier rudeness and bohemianism set off the self-righteousness which underlies Maurice Guest's self-appreciation. For

him the sexual irregularity of Shilsky's life is what looms largest, not the Pole's musical ability. The ironies of the situation are not neglected either, for Shilsky finds Louise's ardours tiring and is painfully aware (as we learn in a superbly comic scene with a sympathetic waitress) that she is older than he. Shilsky remains an artist. His devotion is for his art, not his mistress. The realism of this attitude is set against the idealism of Maurice Guest.

The plot is complicated by the introduction of an American family and Maurice becomes friendly with the silly baby-faced blonde daughter, Ephie, who is studying music. But Shilsky kisses her and, not wishing to harm her vanity, lets her believe that he will marry her. She, like Maurice, is lacking in sophistication — and common sense.

These ironies and elements of comedy become submerged, however, in the novelist's desire to convey an understanding of youthful tensions. Henry Handel Richardson employs a useful technique here. She describes a night at the opera, the scenes at the intervals and the seeing-home of the various young women. This is superbly told, and we can feel sympathy for the heightened tensions of the students, where a look or a smile counts for much, and when not to walk beside one particular person is sheer torture. This is skilful narrative ; it communicates an impression of intensity, of cross currents not understood by the others, for all are wrapped up in their own affairs. This straightforward description of the effect of the events is then reinforced with a further account of what caused the various attitudes underlying them. We can feel with the students and then understand them further. The use of description followed by analysis and explanation can be an effective device at times ; though ultimately it seems that this was forced upon Henry Handel Richardson in the absence of a stream of consciousness technique. She appears to want to avoid commenting ; she wants the story to unfold, the characters to develop on their own. We are allowed to watch more closely, that is all, when she explains with the equivalent of a flash-back.

The torments for Maurice mount up. He hears Louise tell Shilsky he has given her nothing but misery ; so that she is not even happy with his by now hated rival. The first part of the story ends with Shilsky's departure. This walpurgisnacht has its rôle

in the plot. At the student party given to celebrate the Pole's departure Maurice hears Shilsky discussing how Louise has received the news that he is going : he hears, too, that Shilsky is taking money from another woman to get away, and that he is involved with the American blonde. Maurice quarrels violently with him and eventually staggers home drunk. He seems to have reached the depths of despair and this abandonment to alcohol marks his surrender to hopelessness. He now knows that Louise is unhappily in love with Shilsky. He has already blurted out his feelings for her and told her that she has disturbed his peace of mind. Of course, he chooses the worst possible moment for this ; and he feels a simple fool in comparison with what he thinks is her complexity. Awkward, proffering help that she doesn't take seriously, he feels helpless before her ; this defeated-before-begun feeling is intensified by his uncontrollable outburst, itself brought on by his shyness, his inability to be himself when near her. Oblivion and surrender to alcohol are the outward signs of confessed failure. The structure is chiasmic : to escape from Louise has been a victory for Shilsky. He is going away in order to carry his music to further heights. But for Maurice music is to decline in importance, compared to the demands of Louise.

The second part of the novel brings him further along the path of self-knowledge. So far he has realised that he is incapable of having his love returned, or of experiencing coincidence of passion. He is to learn more about himself. He tells Louise of Ephie's identity and brings the silly young girl to see her as she recovers from a brain fever brought on by Shilsky's desertion. Here he abnegates any feelings of responsibility towards Ephie (he had earlier disregarded her relationship with Shilsky despite what he thought of the Pole's morals, because he was too overwhelmed by his own feelings to think energetically enough to compel himself to do something to help Ephie) and reveals to himself how utterly he is under Louise's spell. It is against his better judgment that he brings Ephie to Louise (who regards her as the girl Shilsky has been paying attention to behind her back): he knows he is behaving like a fool and that he is disloyal to the girl. Yet, just as before he could not stop himself from dreaming of Louise, now he cannot stop himself from doing her slightest behest because he has, no doubt, already devoted himself to her service, unconsciously hoping to show her how different his devotion is to that of his rival.

It might be argued that the final departure of the American family and Maurice's inability to defend his own actions with regard to Ephie would have been a suitable close to the first movement of the novel. But the first part of the novel concerns Maurice's love for an ideal and his inability to face up to the impossibility of its attainment. Louise was deeply involved with the Pole, the more deeply because the more unhappily, and the more unhappily because of her genuine passion for him ; she was not interested in Maurice in the least. Yet he could not arrest his interest in her. The lesson he ought to have drawn from the scene between Louise and Ephie is put bluntly to him by Madeleine :

"It ought to teach you a lesson. For you're just the kind of boy women will always take advantage of, a mean advantage, you know. Consider how you were treated in this case — by both of them ! They were not a scrap grateful to you for what you did — women never are. They only look down on you for letting them have their own way."

The ironies deepen. Dove, who has been in love with Ephie, is enraged at her departure but then begins to congratulate himself on a lucky escape. Madeleine has her own interest in Maurice. She is offered an extra year at Leipzig and asks Maurice's advice as to whether she should stay. This conversation is worthy of Meredith, and in it Maurice is as obtuse as Wilfrid Pole :

"I want your advice," she continued. "I was taken quite by surprise myself. Schwarz sent for me, you know, after counterpoint. It was about my *Prüfung* at Easter. If I play then, it's a case of the C minor Beethoven. Well, now he says it's a thousand pities for me to break off just at the stage I'm at, and he wants me to stay for another year. If I do, he'll give me the G major — that's a temptation, isn't it ? On the other hand, I shall have been here my full time — three years — at Easter. That's a year longer than I originally intended, and I feel I'm getting too old to be a pupil. But this talk with Schwarz has upset my plans. I'm naturally flattered at his interesting himself in me. He wouldn't do it for every one. And I do feel I could gain an immense deal in another year. Now, what do you think ? "

"Why, stay, of course, Madeleine. If you can afford it, that is. I can't imagine anyone wanting to leave."

"Oh, my capital will last so long, and it's a good investment."

"But wasn't a place being kept open for you in a school ? "

"Yes ; but I don't think a year more or less will make much difference to them. I must sound them, of course, though," said Madeleine, and did not mention that she had written and posted the letter the night before. "Then you advise me to stay ? "

"Why, of course," he repeated, and was mildly astonished at her. "If everything is as smooth as you say."

"You would miss me, if I left?"

"Why, of course, I should," he said again, and wondered what in the world she was driving at.

"Well, all the better," replied Madeleine. "For when one has really got to like a person, one would rather it made a difference than not."

She was silent after this, and sat looking down the stretch of ice they had travelled: the moon was behind a cloud, and the woods on either side were masses of dense black shadow. Not a soul was in sight; the river was like a deserted highway. Madeleine stared down it, and did not feel exactly satisfied with the result of her investigation. She had not expected anything extraordinary—Heaven forbid!—but she had been uncomfortably conscious of Maurice's surprise. To her last remark, he had made no answer: he was occupied with the screw of one of his skates.

II

The second movement of the novel develops Maurice's sentimental education further. He cannot escape, he makes the fatal decision that he will be Louise's friend. The immature nature of this decision is demonstrated to the full as he decides to ration himself, to impose limits on his seeing her. Ironically, and almost inevitably, as he makes these restrictions he becomes more deeply involved in her life, accepting the rôle of slave willingly and gladly. He busies himself with superficial schemes for improving her health, for she is still inconsolable. He drives her to solitary walks, which she doesn't appreciate, because he thinks she must like the things he likes. He still finds others baffling to comprehend. Artists like Shilsky, and Louise, who is an artist in her own way, are beyond his present understanding as indeed he is himself.

But he cannot remain completely in ignorance for ever. Louise persuades him to take her to a dance. When he holds her in his arms he is deeply disturbed, more by her sensual abandonment to the rhythm than by his awakened interest in her body. His puritanism and jealousy exacerbate each other, and he vents on her partners the pangs of sexual jealousy which underlay his hatred of Shilsky. And yet when he sees her home and there is a subtle half-expressed invitation to an embrace he avoids it. It would upset, her, he thinks, and so he prolongs his torture. Indeed he intensifies it by sending her off to Dresden for a change of air.

Louise is followed on her return by a letter containing a proposal from a wealthy American she met there. She asks Maurice's advice, should she marry him? For Maurice, who has expected her to understand his initial glance of burning devotion, to fathom the passion that underlay his confession to her that she disturbed his peace of mind, to realise the sensitive feeling that has informed his self-abasing friendship since Shilsky left, this is too much. He fails to realise that Louise is in earnest when she says she wants to get peace: 'It's myself I think of, first and foremost, and as long as I live, it will always be myself.'

He is, however, forced to face the situation that she doesn't care for him in the least; and, still not completely comprehending her character, nor yet realising that his own interest in her is by now predominantly sexual, he decides the situation is too intolerable, and gets ready to leave Leipzig.

But in addition to his other frailties he is sentimental as well. He wants recognition of his friendship; and she turns on him once he says he is going. He has made himself indispensable to her, for she now is experiencing some of the loneliness that overpowered him when he first came to Leipzig. Yet paradoxically, just as he is beginning to fumble his way to a solution where he may eventually put together a coherent explanation of how he has been behaving, how he has been hallucinated, and escape from the maelstrom of passion within which he has been secretly living, just as he is about to escape into normal life again, even at the negative cost of not solving the problem he has always imagined Louise to be, he makes his greatest mistake. They have a series of farewells and he allows himself to be seduced. He has sold his puritanical birthright; and for a brief time it seems that the return has been worth while. They pass a rhapsodic time in the country.

III

It is at this point, I think, that Henry Handel Richardson has reached the crisis of the novel. Maurice has committed his hamartia, his fatal mistake. He has had chances to withdraw, chances to return to his original interest in his work. He is unlike Shilsky, who resented Louise's interference with his time, with, in other words, his work; for Shilsky was strong enough to rate his work as most important to

him, and to refuse to be withdrawn from it by a possessive woman. Maurice is too weak, and he fails in self-respect. And his tragedy is that in making his choice of woman rather than work, he is the ultimate romantic. And so that third part of the novel shows life at work punishing Maurice for his mistake.

The mistake, of course, is that he, ambitious yet moderate in talent, is untrue to himself in prostituting his mind and talents to a girl who is primarily a sensualist, whose standards are not his own. His own remain those of the provincial town from which he came. He is incapable of dominating her as she unconsciously craves to be dominated. He has begun in such a way that for him to begin to assert his wishes against hers would seem brutal. And yet by not asserting his will he is storing up explosions of hate within himself, which would shatter him when they burst forth. His puritanism makes him suspicious of her loyalty, and not without reason.

Louise dominates Maurice physically in the third movement. She doesn't care about his musicianship. In his disappointment at performing badly — a thing not unnatural considering the strain under which he had been living — he loses all faith in himself and Louise cannot restore it. And so he is led to expose his unsureness. How does he compare to Shilsky, he asks in his desire for further self-torture. And when she tells him Shilsky was a genius he realises she is still in love with the Pole. The physical side of their affair, so vital to him, so obviously unimportant to her, seems of doubtful value. This unimportance hasn't occurred to him before; and now he has further to learn the lesson of her infidelity. He loses his head, he quarrels with a man who takes her home from a dance; he beats her; yet he still fails to assert the superiority this temporarily gives him in her eyes. The disintegration continues; his money is cut off; he gives up pretence of working at his music; and then he finds Shilsky has returned. Louise leaves him, and after an episode with a woman of the streets, he commits suicide.

This last incident carries the self-abandonment of the first night when he got drunk to its ultimate impasse. His utter renunciation of his former self is signified by this negation of all his earlier idealism. Sex has won its battle with the prude, the prig, the puritan in him: and it has done so because he abandoned his own

standards in his attempt to adapt them to those of Louise. We are left with a problem. Are we to think no good of Louise? Are we to see her side of the question? We can see that at least she is always true to herself, and to her own more superficial attitude to sex, and that because of her own artistic temperament she is possessed by an understanding passion for Shilsky which remains constant through her other entanglements. Her character is deeper than Maurice's. Krafft puts this view of her in terms sufficiently extravagant to shock Madeleine Wade:

Her instinct taught her what was required of her. She would fall into an attitude, and remain motionless in it, as if she knew the eye must feast its full. Or if she did move, and speak — for she, too, had hours of a desperate garrulity — then one was content, as well. Her vitality was so intense that her whole body spoke when her lips did; she would pass so rapidly from one position to another that you had to shut your eyes for fear that, out of all this multitude, you would not be able to carry one away with you. If some of her ways of expressing herself in motion could be caught, and fixed, a sculptor's fame would be made. A painter's, if he could reproduce the trick she has of smiling entirely with her eyes and eyebrows. And then her hands! — Mada, I wonder you other women don't weep for envy of them. She has only to raise them, to pass them over her forehead, or to finger at her hair, and the world is hers. Do you really think a man asks a soul of a woman with such eyes and hands as those? — Good God, no! He worships her and adores her. There is only one place for him, and that's on his knees before her.

After this comment we may well ask what is the rôle of Krafft himself? At first Maurice has had a friendship with him; he is the *deus ex machina* who acts as lever at various cruxes of the plot. It is hinted that he has been a homosexual friend of Shilsky's: Louise has been jealous of him; he has had an affair with her before she fell for Shilsky; he uses his knowledge of Shilsky's address to have relations with her again; he twice interferes with Maurice, telling him of her misdoings; he tells Maurice of the gunsmith's shop where he will get the gun; he seems to have been responsible for the sad fate of Averill Hill. He is not clearly defined. Is he a superman, does he despise normal human decencies? Is he a Byronic aftermath, or one of the hang-overs from the nineties, a decadent searching for new experiences to refresh his jaded palate? It is he who understands the others all too well; he who can describe Louise so devastatingly to Madeleine, and Madeleine to herself, equally devastatingly.

Krafft is in fact a spokesman of a Nietzschean point

of view. In relation to the other characters he remains enigmatic, perhaps because his creator did not herself understand him so well, certainly not well enough to dwell on him as long or as ironically as on, say, Dove. She gives the impression of having conjured up a djinn of whose diabolic powers she was afraid, yet her sensitivity lies in her ability to put both sides of the query.

Shilsky remains the artist *par excellence*, the young man who has action on his side ; he is Buck Mulligan in his coarse practicality, his readiness to grasp life with both hands. He is the obverse of Madeleine, who remains an image of virtuous dullness. The novel contrives to cram many attitudes into its tightly packed pages ; but the attitude out of which Henry Handel Richardson wrote *Maurice Guest* was one of exploration. She introduced self-righteous dreaming idealism to self-centred sexual attraction, and watched what Maurice made out of it. Life at Leipzig was his testing ground, as Krafft points out :

"Good God, Madeleine!" burst out Krafft. "That you should have been in this place as long as you have, and still remain so immaculate? — Surely you realise that something more than talent and perseverance is necessary? One can have talent as one has a hat . . . use it or not as one likes. — I tell you, the mill Guest is going through may be his salvation — artistically."

"And morally?" asked Madeleine, not without bitterness. "Must one give thanks then, if one's friend doesn't turn out a genius?"

Krafft shrugged his shoulders. "As you take it. The artist has as much to do with morality, as, let us say, your musical festivals have to do with art. — And if his genius isn't strong enough to float him, he goes under, *und damit basta!* The better for art. There are bunglers enough. But I'll tell you this," he rose on his elbow again, and spoke more warmly. "Since I've seen what our friend is capable of ; how he has allowed himself to be absorbed ; since, in short, he has behaved in such a highly un-British way — well, since then, I have some hope of him. He seems open to impression. And impressions are the only things that matter to the artist."

Maurice fails in this testing, because he knew nothing of himself, and because of that, nothing of life.

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Howard Nemerov

The View From Pisgah

*Our God was to be a breath, and not a postcard
Of the sun setting over Niagara Falls :
" Wish you were here ". Our God was first the breath
That raised a whirlwind in the desert dust,
The Wilderness of Sin. And then a word
Unspeakable, a stillness, and a standing stone
Set in the road; you would not raise a chisel
Upon that stone. Nothing but sky and sand
To purify a forbidden generation
Of milk and honey. In that wilderness
I've wandered for my forty years also,
Lifting mirages to break horizons, dreaming
Idolatries to alphabet the void,
Sending these postcards to the self at home :
Sunlight on pouring water ; wish I were here.*

Polonius

Passing Through A Stage

*Try to be yourself, they told the child.
I tried. Accumulating all those years
The blue annuities of silence some called
Wisdom, I heard sunstorms and exploding stars,
The legions screaming in the German wood —
Old violence petrifying where it stood.*

*The company in my globe theatre rants
Its famous histories, the heroes fall
In ketchup and couplets. Ten heavenly don'ts
Botch up a selfhood, but where there's a Will
He's away. Rotting at ease, a ghostly doll —
What is that scratching on my heart's wall ?*

*I tried to be myself. The silence grew
Till I could hear the tiniest Mongol horde
Scuffle the Gobi, a pony's felted shoe.
Then from the fiery pit that self-born bird
Arose. A rat ! The unseen good old man —
That sort of thing always brings the house down.*

HOWARD NEMEROV (cont.)

To The Bleeding Hearts Association Of American Novelists

*My grown-ups told me when I started out,
"You have to suffer in order to create."
It took me twenty years of stubborn doubt
Before I found the half-truth in all that.*

*We have so many fancy fellows now
That cannot leave their sufferings alone.
They spend their precious talents learning how
To paint a sigh, and decorate a groan.*

*Realistic till it hurts while it astounds
(and to conceal some small defects of art),
They slop their ketchup in the statue's wounds
And advertise that blood as from the heart.*

*I like those masters better who expound
More inwardly the nature of our loss,
And only offhand let us know they've found
No better composition than a cross.*

The Edinburgh Festival

GRAPESHOT
IN HINDSIGHT

Hugh C. Rae

Save that Oases are necessary if only to point out the aridity of the wastes surrounding them, one can think of no real reason for billeting an International Festival of the Arts in Edinburgh. Fair though the City be, it is doubtful whether the organisers intend it purely to boost the sale of tartan goods and other "scotch" commodities.

The historical traditions of Edinburgh can hardly be said to connect it more than loosely to the mainstream of European culture. More practically its theatres and auditoriums are far from suited to many of the performances which custom, and the status the Festival has now attained, demand. (I have it on good authority, though I myself am cursed with an alloy ear, that this is particularly true of the musical items.)

The creation of atmosphere necessary for the complete enjoyment of visitors is whipped up not so much by the efforts of the organisers, hand in hand with the City Council, as by the mere numerical weight of the visitors themselves; by diversity of tongues and pigmentation and, as my wife has been good enough to point out, by the living display of feminine apparel from the best fashion houses of three continents. The

coloured lights, wind-tilted ornaments, the stark cinemascopic postcard of the Castle dropping in spires and turrets down the Royal Mile to the ridge of Arthur's Seat — whether one likes them or not they are the cream on top of the trifle. Beneath, where the thinking-man's spoon should scoop the subtle flavours of a dozen different arts, are perhaps only two tastes: the sweetness of the good and tartness of the mediocre. If the Festival is not to be judged simply as another charm on the amateur cosmopolitan's bracelet but as a showcase for new works, fresh performances of the tried and true, and special collections of the best in the plastic arts; if this, then it must be set down as a little disappointing.

To contradict myself immediately, there is one item which stands out above all others, the exhibition in Waverley Market of sculpture and drawings by the late Jacob Epstein. The presentation, under difficulties offered by the size and bleakness of the Market, is immaculate, itself a masterpiece of taste. Lighting, arrangement, and the setting of individual pieces add greatly to the impressiveness of bronzes large and small and brings out the full power and complexity of such monumental stones as "Adam" and "Ecce Homo". It is seldom that such a wide range of a single artist's work can be presented without a display of some unavoidable periods of lapse. It is a commentary primarily on Epstein's unique imaginative ability and his continual questing for deeper expression within the confines of the material that every which immediately compels attention. The delicate fecundity of "Genesis" gives way by a completely natural process to the squat primeval shape of "Elemental", and to the compassionate veracity of the busts of this period — Einstein, for example — piece shown here is imbued with a magnetic interest leading latterly into the almost casual assurance of his most famous portrait bronzes. The extensive range of this exhibition, covering as it does such a wide chronological field and including work of so many differing styles, demonstrates the degree of versatile energy which is in itself a form of genius. It is doubtful if such a complete and wholly satisfying display of Epstein's work will be brought together in this way for many years to come.

Though many of the paintings from the Bührle Collection (masterpieces of French painting from the Bührle Collection — from Ingres to Picasso — in the

Royal Scottish Academy) have been on view in this country before, it is perhaps the most formidable representative collection ever to be shown in Edinburgh. It allows welcome comparison between the artists and, covering as it does such an important period in the history of art, allows too some linking of styles and influences to be made. Included is the work of many artists whose works have taken root in the "popular" conception of "art". The Cezannes are particularly fine, and some of the best paintings of less illustrious, but no less talented, artists of the Post-Impressionist period are of exceptional interest: Signac, Vlaminck and Derain, Vuillard and Bonnard among them.

In passing from the visual to the auditory aspects of the Festival we are at once confronted by a staggering range of subjects. From Juliette Greco to Finney's "Luther," and running the gamut in between of half a hundred forefront items and double that number if underground activities of ardent student groups be taken into account; from this to that then would take a constitution sharpened to Olympic standards and a mind of terrier-like tenacity to encompass. As "Luther" is treated later in *The Dubliner* in an examination of Osborne's work for the theatre, I propose to concentrate on two of the new plays which were seen here.

Lawrence Durrell's "Sappho" was a decided disappointment. A careful reading of the runes leads me to suspect that it would be at best a glorious failure and at worst a brush with the impossible. In "Key to Modern Poetry," Durrell devotes considerable space to an examination of the verse play. Oddly he points out in the work of Eliot and others faults which he himself makes. "Sappho" was completed in 1948, and according to the publisher's imprint the "Key" did not appear until 1952. It may have been that the work expended on "Sappho" prompted the insight displayed in the criticism. Whatever the origins of Durrell's failure, in a recent interview he seemed not unhappy with the job the tailors have produced from his originally longer and more amorphous script. He is neither complacent nor disparaging about the play's Englished version. He is interested in it as a spring-board to possible future efforts in verse drama. I am afraid the audience were not as interested in it as Mr. Durrell.

The play does not convince. Its failure to hold attention lies not in the plot (which is intricate, plausible and roundly finished) or in the poetry (which, if not plausible or roundly finished, is just as intricate), but in the lack of dramatic action. Even the most lyrical of plays must contain a certain degree of posed violence (emotional if not physical), thrown up at fairly frequent intervals. The tender violence of Eliot's characters in the eloquent drawing-room dramas, or the theatrical fire of the virile Mr. Fry are intrinsic to statements of theme and exposition; in terms of dramatically satisfying verse, they are vital. Durrell, having selected a rich vein of material, which he mines with unquestionable authority, fails to produce the reverberations of character and enmeshment of personalities necessary to sustain the graciousness of the poetic line. The set speeches are pretty, the dialogue elegant and amusing, but the tone and action run as flatly as the horizon on a postcard of the Ionian sea. The Bristol Old Vic Company do what they can to enliven the play. Miss Margaret Rawlings as Sappho gives a performance in which the less objectionable traits of the poetess are smoothed away by graceful movements and a dulcet but commanding voice. She catches the intended harmonies of the words and, with a refined performer's dignified aplomb, invests the pauses with subtle inflections almost as telling as the sounds. It would be unfair to lay the blame for boredom at the sandalled feet of the cast.

The play, as the saying goes, is the thing. Before dealing with the substance of Nigel Dennis's "August for the People," may I say a word of praise to Rex Harrison, who portrayed Sir Augustus Thwaite, for a performance which was beautifully attuned to the swift, shifting atmosphere of the theme. This was exciting; an interesting and provocative work expertly handled by an experienced cast.

"August for the People" is immediately enthralling. It is venomously comic but with a strong pulse of seriousness which pumps the play towards catastrophe. Significantly, the notes of uncertainty in basic theme, if not clarified, are stated with a harsh verbal agility which hammers home the implications without really pausing to make them explicit.

Thwaite's initial protest against "democracy" is spurted forth in an after-dinner speech to his fellow members of the landed gentry whose contact with the public is made at the gates of stately homes in exchange for half-a-crown. This strong, explosive protest sets off a ring of echoes which the play traces to the last disturbing note. We watch the effects of his initial, almost amiable fury on his kin, on the other members of his social group, and on the anonymous mass. The anger is controlled, the accusations barbed, and we are drawn to the conception of a world in which the average citizen, the aristocracy, and the general public merge and are lost each in the other. The disturbing development in the comedy enters here with the realisation that such a world as Thwaite envisages would be close to hell, a desert with no place to hide. From here the play flows through several amusing but biting scenes to the final edge of breakdown which, though it is couched in the spirit of farce is stained with a horrific element. The whole is carried off with refreshingly sophisticated sincerity, and a verbal brilliance which, however illusive the central meaning of the play may be, made it an exciting conclusion to the Festival's offering of drama.

Books

IN DEFENSE OF REASON. By Yvor Winters. (Alan Swallow, \$6.00.)

It is a relatively easy thing for poets to get published these days, and once in print they can expect a predictable modicum of praise from our literary cheerleaders. For some, it is only a matter of time before they become prefects of the literary school to which they owe allegiance. But before being passed on to posterity with honours, sooner or later they will have to reckon with Mr. Yvor Winters.

In Defense of Reason, a collection of Winters's published criticism to 1947, is the Conscience of modern literature. Incorporating his three previous volumes (*Primitivism and Decadence*, *Maule's Curse*, and *The Anatomy of Nonsense*) and a new essay (*The Significance of 'The Bridge' by Hart Crane*), it is a conglomerate work of awesome erudition and scholarship, of rigorous thought and consistent application, and of extraordinary sensitivity, in masterful and frequently entertaining prose. In short, I believe it to be the most valuable body of criticism of our time.

In the Foreword Winters identifies the dragon, Romanticism, and her partners in crime, Determinism and Relativism; in the remaining six hundred pages he proceeds to slay them whenever he finds them subverting otherwise admirable literary efforts. Winters makes his position clear from the outset:

I believe that the work of literature, in so far as it is valuable, approximates a real apprehension and communication of a particular kind of objective truth. . . . The poem is a statement in words about a human experience. . . . The poem is good in so far as it makes a defensible rational statement about a given human experience (the experience need not be real but must be in some sense possible) and at the same time communicates the emotion which ought to be motivated by that rational understanding of that experience.

The poem, then, consists in the relationship between the rational content and the emotion; the success of the poem depends upon the adjustment between the two, and its greatness is determined by its theme.

The essays from *Primitivism and Decadence* introduce us to the implications of Winters's critical position. In a lengthy examination of the structural methods of modern American poetry he postulates:

Form is expressive invariably of the state of mind of the author; a state of formlessness is legitimate subject matter for literature, and in fact all subject matter, as such, is relatively formless; but the author must

endeavour to give form, or meaning, to the formless — in so far as he endeavours that his own state of mind may imitate or approximate the condition of the matter, he is surrendering to the matter instead of mastering it. Form, in so far as it endeavours to imitate the formless, destroys itself.

And in another essay, after a brilliant analysis and demonstration of the scansion of free verse, Winters issues a call for traditional metre :

The sum total may be described briefly as follows : coherence of movement, variety of movement, and fine perceptivity. These virtues can occur in conjunction only in a system in which every detail is accounted for. That is, if the system is based (as English verse is normally based) on accent, then every syllable must be recognizably in or out of place whether stressed or not, and if out of place in a classifiable way ; the degree of accent must vary perceptibly though immeasurably from a perceptible though immeasurable norm ; quantity should be used consciously to qualify these conditions ; in brief, the full sound-value of every syllable must be willed for a particular end, and must be precise in the attainment of that end. . . . In a system such as English syllabics, or as free verse, most or all of the individual syllables can have no definite relationship to the pattern ; so that there is no exact basis for judging them, and they are, when chosen, relatively without meaning.

The Curse of *Maule's Curse* is American obscurantism, and the Cursed are Hawthorne, Cooper, Melville, Poe, Emerson, James, and Emily Dickinson. Winters regards each, with the exception of Poe, as having produced at one time or another writing of the highest order — indeed, he calls Emily Dickinson "one of the greatest lyric poets of all time" — but they were all crippled by a common problem :

. . . the choice between abstractions inadequate or irrelevant to experience on the one hand, and experience on the other as far as practicable unilluminated by understanding, is tragically characteristic of the history of this country and of its literature ; only a few scattered individuals, at the cost of inordinate labour, and often impermanently, have achieved the permeation of human experience by a consistent moral understanding which results in wisdom and in great art.

After disposing of twelve "Preliminary Problems," Winters begins *The Anatomy of Nonsense*. As in *Maule's Curse*, he chooses to discuss writers with demonstrable qualities whose work he feels is damaged by the Romantic dragon : Henry Adams, Wallace Stevens, T. S. Eliot, and John Crowe Ransom. He credits Adams with having written "the greatest historical work in English, with the probable exception of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*," whilst Adams's later work represents "the radical disintegration of a mind." Although Stevens' "Sunday

Morning' is "probably the greatest American poem of the twentieth century" and "certainly one of the greatest contemplative poems in English,"

the conflict between the traditional element and the element encouraged by [Steven's] philosophy results little by little in the destruction of the traditional element and the degradation of the poet's style.

In a thorough treatment of Eliot's poetry and criticism Winters concludes that "the theory and influence of Eliot . . . seem to me the most dangerous and nearly the least defensible of our time." As a theorist, he has "repeatedly contradicted himself on every important issue that he has touched"; as a poet, he cast 'The Waste Land' in "a broken blank verse interspersed with bad free verse and rimed doggerel." John Crowe Ransom's criticism comes in for a beating in the final essay of this section — in many ways, the most splendidly written of all the essays — as Winters divides Ransom into eleven parts and proceeds to litter the pages with his remains.

The last essay, on Hart Crane, is a calm, reasoned, tactical approach to Crane's great near-miss, 'The Bridge.' It goes into Crane's poetic genius at the same time as it goes into the Whitmanian ideas that killed it. And Winters attacks these ideas with the conviction of a man who has seen a number of poetic talents, and at least one friend, ruined by such ideas.

Winters's critical method has produced a critical masterpiece, but the method was only designed for one overall purpose, (in this case dealing with Stevens) that "we should know what is bad, and why it is bad, so that we may separate the bad from the good and the more surely preserve the good." And he has an exacting test for separating the bad from the good:

It will be seen that what I desire of a poem is a clear understanding of motive, and a just evaluation of feeling; the justice of the evaluation persisting even into the sound of the least important syllable. Such a poem is a perfect and complete act of the spirit; it calls upon the full life of the spirit; it is difficult of attainment, but I am aware of no good reason to be contented with less.

Ezra Pound once ended an essay thus: "I am almost a different person when I come to take up the argument for Eliot's poems." This sets up one of the finest tributes that could be paid to Winters, for he never takes up the argument for someone's poems without first taking up the argument for excellence in poetry; and he is never a different person — he always requires "a perfect and complete act of the spirit," and he is never contented with less.

LATER POEMS. By Austin Clarke (*The Dolmen Press, Dublin. 18/6d.*) Distributed outside Ireland by the Oxford University Press.

Austin Clarke should need no introduction. Outside Ireland his reputation is perhaps the highest of any of her contemporary poets excepting only Padraic Colum. This volume contains all of his poems which have appeared since the publication of *Collected Poems* in 1935, prefaced by twenty-three from the earlier collection. It is reassuring to see this publisher producing a neat and sober volume for a change, with a thankful lack of gimmicks and coloured inks. Only inadequate proof reading however could account for the errata, and intending purchasers would do well to check individual copies for an unsightly page crease, page 87, and smudged inks, pages 73 and 80.

Clarke has been very properly, and very highly, praised for his technical effects. His use of assonantal devices from Gaelic poetry is effective and even exciting, especially in the earlier work. There is a harsh and ascetic world people with an almost pagan fervour.

There by dim wells the women tied
A wish on thorn, while rainfall
Was quiet as the turning of books
In the holy schools at dawn.

This is good, of course. But it would be so much better if achieved with a variation and change of mood. Instead, the note which is initially struck so neatly is merely re-shaped and re-emphasised. One longs for a change from the hollow ships and pilgrims' prayers.

The poems from *Night and Morning* also deal with episodes from Irish history. The sullen resentment to the established church which brooded over the earlier work becomes more explicit. Even the odd chink of humour breaks through.

Men voted for the Liberator
After the booths were closed
And only those in failing health
Remembered their own souls.

The second half of the book contains poems published since 1955. *Ancient Lights* seems to advance to a less morbid preoccupation with what can only be called poetical blarney. Clarke is definitely more interested in saying something original than in the prosodic devices to be employed in saying it. Here is the opening of *An Early Start* :

Wide-awake, suddenly, as that new clang there,
 I clapped my ears beneath the bedclothes, guessing
 The Fathers of the Holy Ghost had bought
 A bigger bell.

And in *The Envy of Poor Lovers* a young lady, frustrated by the exigencies of ordained abstinence, lies under a hedge :

Her envy is the curtain seen at night-time,
 Happy position that could change her name.
 His envy — clasp of the unmarried whose thoughts
 can be alike.

Whose nature flows without the blame or shame.

Is Clarke suggesting that they live in sin ? In fact, no. He makes an honest poem of it in the errata. Rather gloomily we are told to read *married* for *unmarried*.

It will be immediately evident that the by now very explicit antagonism to organised religion underlies these later poems also. Clarke is not anti-religious, it is fair to say, but anti-clerical. He believes in the dignity of the individual and his personal emotions, objecting to their regimentation or repression by an often glib and self-centred clergy. This is an admirable sentiment, but is not conducive to good poetry. Such fervour seldom is. Mr. Clarke had a bee in his bonnet, but it has grown into a vulture. Every comment gains its point in being a product of repression or encouragement, in either case religious or governmental, and in either case criminal.

Celibacy is our best rule still,
 Restraint increasing its adherents.

. . . can an ill state

Like ours, carry so great
 A Church upon its back ?

Occasionally in the odd passage or short poem in *The Horse Eaters* Clarke puts criticism to shame by writing the most beautiful lines. This is why it is annoying that great skill should be marred not only by a tendency to sermonise, but that it should cater to a demand for an Ireland of clichés, of peasants, priests and revolution. Yeats, for all his faults, does manage this world with the right mixture of reverence and rejection. Clarke, in much the same vein, repeats but never improves upon. Somewhere along the line he has missed a bus that he ought to have caught. Perhaps the next one will be due before his next book. I hope so.

Michael Leahy.

HAMLET: A Tragedy of Errors. By Weston Babcock.
(Purdue University Studies, \$1.75.)

THE PARADOX OF GEORGE ORWELL. By Richard J. Voorhees. (Purdue University Studies, \$1.75.)

As Professor Babcock points out in his preface, "I realize, of course, that in attempting to analyze *Hamlet* through its dramaturgy, I am approaching the play on one level only." Already conscious of one of those vague literary misdemeanours which only Ph.D.'s apparently commit, he proceeds to give us what is in fact a sane and nonsense-free book on *Hamlet*. Whilst no doubt adding a great deal to the understanding of *Hamlet* generally (by sheer dint of professorial acumen), what the author has unwittingly produced, rather than a 'new' approach to the play, is a valuable handbook for *Hamlet's* actors and actresses. Taken in this light the book is not only desirable, but necessary; and here it is quite unique. As a simple reviewer, tired of innumerable published theses subsidized by any of a thousand university trusts, I am not qualified to criticise what has no doubt been the work of intense concentration; but I do know that every new dust-jacket proudly proclaims one eye-catching half-truth, and that for this book, well, we are assured that what we are reading is free from 'critical jargon.' I say read the book if you intend to act *Hamlet*: it is a must for those whose interest in the play goes beyond strictly literary considerations. The publishers were unfortunate in choosing for the cover of a sophisticated book what appears to be a set of amplex advertisements in diamondal orange lozenges.

We end with the cover of one book and begin with the cover of the second: two Orwellian three-quarter profiles, the one on the left a negative of the photo on the right. Didn't Orwell believe in the Left as a positive? Are we here introduced to our first paradox? It doesn't matter; Professor Voorhees has written what may well be the 'perfect' work on Orwell—it is just, rich in content, and covers every aspect of Orwell's dilemma. Infinitely preferable to anything written in England, it is also easier to utilize, making it the ideal work for both layman and literateur. That it should have been written by an American, to whom Orwell must appear in almost Beelzebubbian focus, is yet greater proof that the author (who doesn't dote hysterically, or appear as a 'fan,' as many of his contemporaries across the water)

tackles the paradox masterfully. The entire length of the grey Orwellian rainbow is examined (completed by the clergyman's daughter's glue-pot) in such a sincere fashion that we are tempted to look for Orwell's humanity and insight, ample evidence of which exists in the essays, rather than to the substance of his novels, the themes of which appear all too often nowadays as elongated political conundrums (1984 is no longer two hundred years away, it is impossible). In examining the paradox we are seeing the human being for the first time, and it is a complex individual who starts off as an Eton-boy cum politico-dabbler, to travel through life as a Spanish Republican Army man, a dishwasher, a critic, a bum, and a rich, sick hermit on an island.

Rudi Holzapfel.

POISONED LANDS. By John Montague (MacGibbon & Kee, 12/6d.)

In December 1958, John Montague had a book of poems published by The Dolmen Press, called *Forms of Exile*. It contained some very fine pieces that went practically unnoticed. It was only by way of a public reading of his verse that a large audience was convinced of Mr. Montague's poetic talent. Anyone still in doubt should be referred to his latest book, *Poisoned Lands*. It not only places Montague firmly in the top rank of living Irish poets, but it brings something long overdue to Anglo-Irish verse.

I heard him say once that one of the achievements of modern verse was its use of the conversational tone. One might add that in poetry a conversational tone that is unimpassioned may easily degenerate into banality. Mr. Montague has taken pains to see that this does not happen to his own verse. His imagery is crisp and suitably startling, and through it he sparks language into an intense life of its own. Of the poor old woman (the Sean Bhean Bhocht) he writes :

She rocked to and fro,
A doll's head mouthing under stained rafters.

The finest thing in Montague's verse seems to me to be an austere economy of expression which suggests much more than it states. This gives his love poetry (of which we get far too little) a peculiar power and subtlety :

And yet, my love, we two have come
Into love as to a lighted room
Where all is gaiety and humbling grace.
Hearts long bruised with indolence,
With harsh fatigue of unrelated fact, can trace
Redeeming patterns of experience.

Mr. Montague has a deadly accurate eye and he translates what he sees with a disturbing accuracy of language. In 'A Royal Visit,' 'Old Mythologies,' 'The Water Carrier,' and 'Woodtown Manor' he gives us poems which are remarkable for a chiselled beauty, a dead-rightness of phrase and image. When he abandons this accuracy for a loose rhetoric, as in 'Incantation in Time of Peace,' the poetry has a high-sounding emptiness.

Mr. Montague won the May Norton Prize for his poem, 'Like Dolmens Round My Childhood, the Old People,' and it is indeed a very fine poem. I believe he is unique among Irish poets in that he is able to bring a character before us in two lines.

She was a well of gossip defiled,

Fanged chronicler of a whole countryside.

This is good, but even this pales beside his superb dramatic lyric, 'The Mummer Speaks,' in which he evokes a primitive, savage, pulsating life through the characters :

He paused on the threshold,

Clashed his sword of wood,

His swinging lantern on the snow

Threw blood-red circles where he stood ;

Herded listeners numbly gaped

Like goslings, as if they understood.

For those who like to play about with "influences," I suggest that Montague's are to be found in Paris, where he is living at present, and America, where, in a sense, he has lived all his life. Though he has absorbed a lot from both, he speaks with an individual voice. And a discernible Irish accent.

Brendan Kennelly.

THE OBOE PLAYER. By James L. Weil. (*The Golden Quill Press, \$2.75.*)

James L. Weil is a young poet thirty-two years old. He is trying to write like poets three hundred years old. He could do worse : he could be trying to write like everyone else.

The Oboe Player is Mr. Weil's fifth book of poems, and in it he emerges as one of the few young American poets whose roots extend back further than Dr. Williams. He has remained aloof from the New American Poem — a nexus of imagery congealed in an uneven cadence — and has instead concerned himself with exploiting the conceptual character of words. This concern has led him to explore more fully than most of his contemporaries the exact nature of relationships between words, and, inevitably, to discover that when two loaded words rub up against each other a moment of friction occurs which

we call a pun: And this leads us to the most arresting characteristic of Mr. Weil's poetry: his use of the pun. Frequently it is an instrument of humour, as when he calls his poetry-writing days "my minstrel period" or exposes the Grand Canyon as "one of the greatest gaps in all of history." But usually the humour has a slight twist to it:

OEDIPUS AT FREIBERG

Having read Freud who had read
Aeschylus, tied by
umbilical obedience I
am bound to murder my
father and love mother. And I
shall get
sick of guilt and let
her care for me
in bed, where as my
punishment thenceforth I
shall be
made to contemplate my
navel and to make the dirty
usual connection.

It will be seen from this poem and the following that the pun for Mr. Weil is more than a vaguely significant ornament donated to the poem, it is the nucleus around which the poem is built:

EPITAPH FOR KILROY

At Anzio

Here lies Kilroy
who, knowing
the worst
might have written
not I was here
but cursed,

swore only that
he was alive
at all
seeing his own
handwriting on
the wall.

The technique of pun *qua* centre has interesting possibilities, as well as obvious limitations. A great number of doors may be opened at one time through which the poem can move, yet when several doors are opened the poem must be prepared to shut them again by the last line. Still, Mr. Weil has handled his technique with considerable authority, and he has some exquisite word-carvings to show for it.

D.C.

Jon Silkin

The Liberals

*Nothing was beautiful then,
Nothing is more beautiful
Than it then was.
A building I knew nine
Years back is modest yet.
Abrasively puritan even —
The National Assistance Board.*

*It is where the State speaks
With some of its poor
Of their intimate problem: cash.
It all resolves for now
In that: a man's sex, his wife's child
Meit to the half-a-crown
The board gives or withholds.
Yet if cash preserves men process
Of change does not. What seems beautiful
To some, tiny dogs sniffing
The hind-quarters of time,
Seems so being past.
For the mad days are here,
Again, in the Exchange
Where some men queue for dole
And get a bit, and some
Sit in that other harshly
Disinfected place.
I cannot quite make out
What these cashiers are saying,
But paper money rustles
And metal money scrapes.
More metal and less pulp
Are what the poor get.*

*Why not loathe everything;
Why not! The earth is defaced still
With the same crumbling men
And women, like grains
Of impetigo. We foul
The stones we have sprung from
That we share this modest space with,
Loud-mouthed tenants
Brutishly refined
In plucked skirts, and stiff-pants.*

John Montague

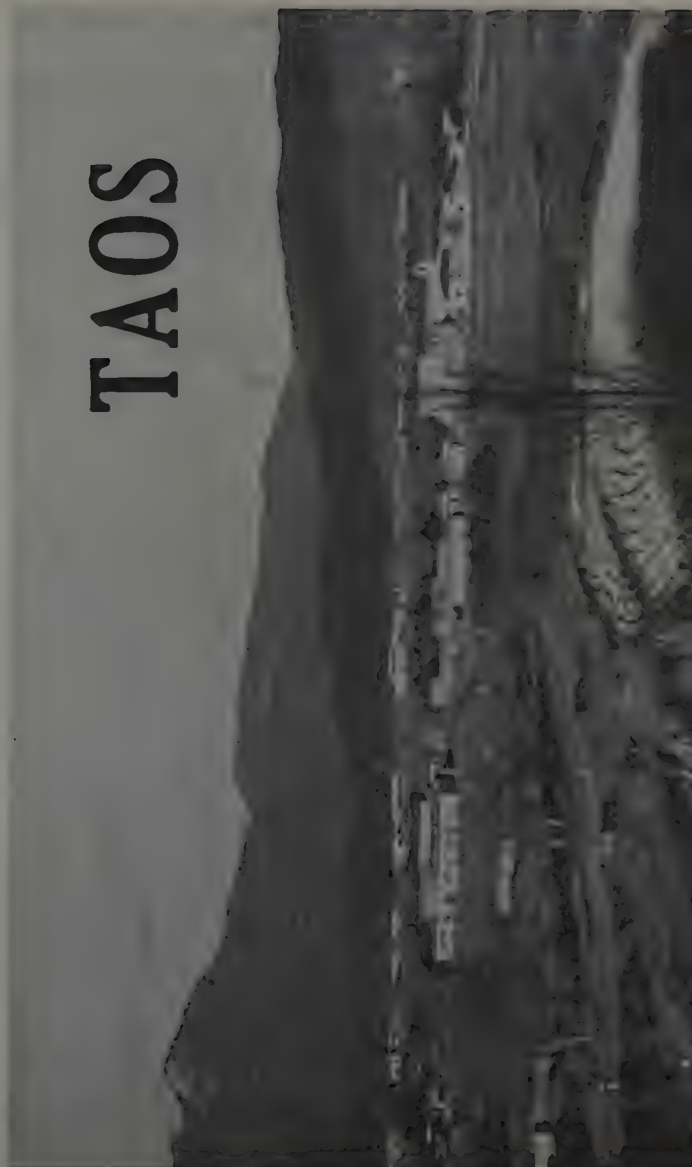
Regionalism, or Portrait Of The Artist As A Model Farmer

*Wild provincials
 Muttering into microphones
 Declare that art
 Springs only from the native part ;
 That like a potato it best grows
 Planted deep in local rows :
 Local loam and local air,
 Local sods and horse manure,
 Watered by a local rain,
 Good for the vegetable brain.
 This potato I plant deep
 In my candid garden heap
 And like a sympathetic farmer
 Shield from all might harm her,
 Foreign beetles and exotic weeds,
 Complicates continental breeds :
 And when my baby tuber
 To its might has grown
 I shall come into my provincial own
 And mutter deep
 In my living sleep
 Of the tradition that I keep,
 That I keep.
 My tiny spud will comfort me
 In my fierce anonymity.*

"... the home of small revolutions"

TAOS

35



"... the home of small revolutions"

TAOS

David Hayman

Famous for years as one of the chief artist colonies of the Southwest and one of the last refuges of D. H. Lawrence, Taos is essentially a small town belonging to the Spanish colonial complex and deriving its culture from the partial fusion of Indian and Spanish elements. Separated from both the north and the south by high mountains and difficult passes, it remained an unpretentious mountain outpost until the turn of the century, an ingrown place preserving traditions long dead, harbouring savage passions and exotic religions. Today Taos proper is a mixture of the real and the make-believe, of the rustic mud (or *adobe*) houses of early settlers and of the Hollywood Spanish of the tourist shops filled with Indian handicrafts, of the newer galleries and the inns. In spite of other, more usual signs of American civilisation: the supermarkets, motels, and corner gasoline stations, it is sometimes difficult to say which aspect dominates the scene, the old or the new. The people are predominantly Spanish, and though the nearby Taos Pueblo daily sends a few dozen Indians into town, wrapped in their J. C. Penney cotton blankets, it is the Spanish element which seems to give the town its tone.

Taos may best be seen as a function of its setting ; for the land was here first and it remains the most impressive thing about the place ; it is the magnet which, more than villages and people with odd customs and curious houses or dress, has pulled successive layers of civilisation to Taos county. It was the wildlife, the soil and the seclusion which first brought the Indians here over 1,000 years ago to settle and eventually to build their Pueblo. It was the seclusion which nourished in them the self-sufficiency and the clannishness which has remained, along with a waning body of customs, in spite of their inter-marriage with Apache plains Indians and Spanish. These qualities have even survived the superimposition of Catholicism upon bedrock pagan beliefs to whose continued existence the underground *kivas* still testify. Repeatedly they have revolted against innovations, making of Taos a trouble spot, the home of small revolutions.

The Spanish came early in the 17th century with Coronado. Attracted by the fertile soil, landowners, bringing with them peasant labour, followed on the heels of the *conquistadores* and the proselytizing clergy. Gradually, with the growth of aridity and competition the peasant community of shepherds and tillers became outmoded, lost many of its native customs to the invading *anglos* and began, like the Irish, to export its manpower. To the *anglos* went the spoils. Coming during the last century as trappers, traders, merchants, artists, the small non-Spanish colony gained possession of most of the unproductive but still scenic land, and much of the town of Taos.

Characteristically, what remains of the colourful Spanish heritage has taken to the hills or rather has never left there. In villages like Trampas, Truchas and Chimayo there subsist the medieval cult of flagellants, the *Penitentes*, whose faith resulted in the production of the most vital original art form to be found in the southwest, the wooden devotional figures, the painted *Santos* depicting for the most part scenes from the Passion, many of which are as powerful on a small scale as the Romanesque images produced centuries earlier by the mountain people of Catalonia. But beyond the appearance of such figures, in the tourist shops and galleries, where they fetch high prices, there is only a slight connection between the mountain people and those of the valley ; and indeed the primitive mountain villages which house the *Penitentes* are some thirty miles from here, by bad roads,

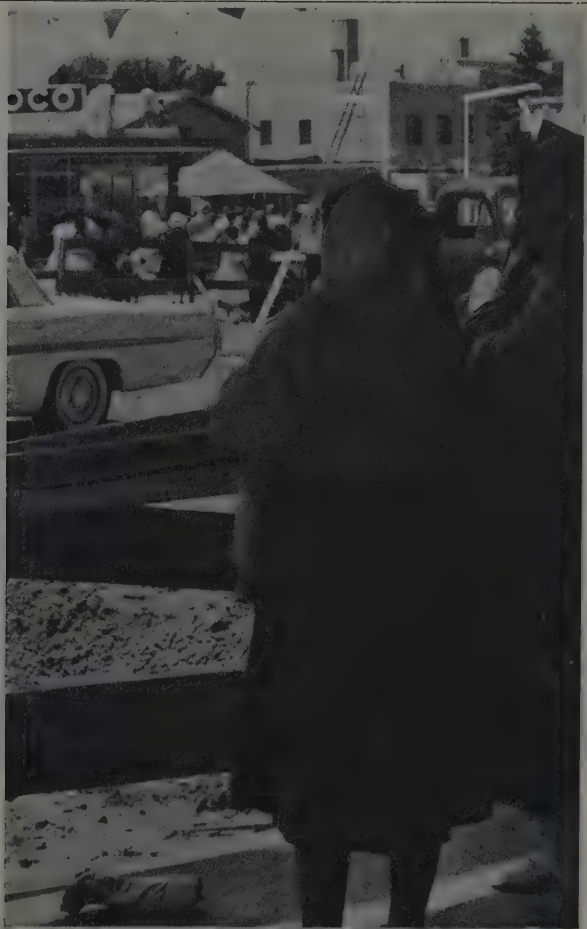
and some two hundred years removed from the young *Taoseños* of today.

Still, the place is beautiful, and from beneath my crab apple tree I have a view as varied as can be found anywhere in the United States. Behind me to the west are the Sangre de Cristos, a solid wall of pine- and piñon-covered mountains which proved in the past an almost impenetrable barrier for invaders ignorant of the location of the passes. The mountains, which conceal among other things the sacred Blue Lake of the Taos Indians and a wealth of richly forested land, are named for the rosy glow cast upon them by the setting sun, but they are proteiform, given to endless change, products of the shifting light. To the north is sagebrush land, blue-grey, the colour of olive trees, but peppered with the deeper green of the nut-bearing piñon trees. As both plants are aromatic, the daily rainstorms with which our summer has been blessed bring with them a heady mixture of scents. To the south, going to meet the mountains, there is irrigated farmland, richly green and studded with adobe houses of all descriptions. Also to the south, beyond the town, the mountains are intersected by the jagged line of the Rio Grande Gorge which cuts deeply through an arid plateau, a wasteland reaching nearly to the horizon but ending in the subtle undulations of further tiers of mountains over which are displayed the most splendid sunsets, the most varied cloud effects I have ever witnessed.

Beneath the calm surface of the town there are conflicts of interest which reflect the variety of the landscape and add something to the glamour of the town to which D. H. Lawrence came in 1922. I might add that little of this glamour is Lawrencian in nature. Though in the near-by pueblo nature demons and local vegetation gods may have risen or have been made to rise from their desecrated shrines, they are not likely to lead debased people back to the light or to cast their glow upon cultural differences. In town the usual amount of drinking leads to the usual amount of wife-beating; the Spanish have little in common with the Anglos; the Anglos are split into interest groups of their own and the Indians nourish ancient differences with the Spanish and more recent ones with the Anglos. Yet Lawrence himself is not completely forgotten. His shrine in the hills to the north attracts tourists, and the Lawrence ranch gets its quota of visiting lecturers and, in the summer,

houses a poet. Last year's tenant was the young and gifted Robert Creeley, who was apparently more tolerant of restrictions and cramped quarters than this year's visitor.

But, perhaps the spirit of D.H. is still pulsating here. One can easily imagine the effect of recent Taos newspaper headlines upon the Lawrencian pen. The Indians' efforts to close off the area of their sacred Blue Lake in the face of the authorities' denial of their right to do so smacks of romance and *The Plumed Serpent*. Blue Lake is the site of the puberty rites celebrated every autumn by the Taos Indians, rites so secret that no stranger is allowed within the



area. In the past more than one person may have been shot for getting too close. Justified though they may be, such proceedings don't recall the glories of the past or Padre Martinez, the penitente-inspired priest who, during the last century, caused the Indian leader José Gonzales to revolt against the governor of New Mexico in a bitter-sweet revolution which resulted in the establishment for a short while of a Taos Indian as Mexican governor of the region.



Even Padre Martinez' ghost might well stir these days as Taos has been witness this winter to a new spate of exotic behaviour, or rather, of painfully serious though misdirected clowning born of the visionary air wafted here from neighbouring mountains, though conceived elsewhere. Curiously, this recent outbreak of fanaticism in a region inured to madness is indicative of the arterial sclerosis of the Spanish community and of Taos' decay as a liberal artist colony. Where Padre Martinez called forth the blood of his people in a selfless attempt to better their lot, the conservative business community of Taos has called forth the bile in an effort to impose upon Taos the latest American fever: John Birchism. It is perhaps appropriate that *El Crepusculo*, the newspaper originally founded by Padre Martinez, has recently been replaced by the *Taos News*, a blatantly conservative paper run by a Santa Fe magnate. Martinez' paper, of which the full title, translated, was *The Twilight of Liberty* was both too liberal and too pro-artist. Following what appears to be the line of the chameleon-like but rabidly nationalistic Birch group, led by ex-military men, the businessmen took over the town in the grand manner of the revolutionary leaders south of the border. They used strongarm methods to overcome opposition coming mainly from the artist community and split the active elements of the town over the question whether or not to show school children the widely discredited anti-communist film "Operation Abolition." In a revolutionary town, firemen with concealed clubs, businessmen with secondhand ideas who take over Parent/Teachers' Associations, veterans' groups, the local electric co-operative, a weekly newspaper and so forth can hardly be seen in any but the comic light as latter-day Babbity. But these are unfortunately signs of the times here in Taos, like rental houses, and like the "rustic" summer cabins being constructed on tiny lots in the mountains hereabouts. Perhaps in the face of this creeping respectability, conformity to national trends, the artists are right when they say that Taos has seen its day as an artist colony; perhaps the indignant Spanish youth will have its day and in due time see the profit motive replace the aesthetic.

Osborne's "Luther"

THE NECESSARY SUFFERING

Marshall Walker

A latecomer to the 1961 Edinburgh Festival, John Osborne's *Luther* arrived swathed in accolades. Kenneth Tynan beamed on the play as the "most eloquent piece of dramatic writing to have dignified our theatre since *Look Back in Anger*" (what price Robert Bolt, John Whiting?) and Albert Finney was the white hope of the English stage. After all that we must be grateful that our disappointment was no more than considerable.

Osborne sticks to history but succeeds in avoiding a mere tedious sprint along the dull chronological line. While denying himself the snappy theatrical effects so ready to hand in the Luther story, he gives us, for example, Tetzels riveting piece of indulgence salesmanship at the beginning of Act II. The scaffolding tends to show at times, but Osborne knows his job well enough to appreciate that a play about so enigmatic a man as Luther must cut a cross-section of the theme to show the grain, the cellular as well as the sequential relevances. Yet for a man who so heartily despises apathy and its sibling, boredom, why does Osborne fail to prevent us from being spasmodically bored as we listen to Brother Martin's self-flagellations, and almost begin to smell his affinity with an aroma somewhat other than the "odour of Christ"? Osborne's set pieces are unmistakably Shavian, and we are told that our inability to attune ourselves to Shaw stems from a failure to see his plays for what they are :

exercises in dramatic stasis, massive verbal congeries building a specific form, that of the word-opera. But rejection of a non-viable form is surely legitimate if not essential in a literary epoch noted for its fluctuations. And *Luther* is, in parts, inescapably dull.

Towards the end of the play the Knight confesses of Brother Martin, "He baffles me. I just can't make him out." It is the density of the fog surrounding the turbulent, endlessly self-contradictory central figure which irritates the audience in the theatre. It was the American psychologist Ericson, I believe, who laid anal and Oedipal complexes as the ultimate provenance of the Reformation. But if the play is any good at all it must do more than celebrate the psychosomatic account of the Protestant conscience.

Since *Epitaph for George Dillon*, which he wrote in collaboration with Anthony Creighton, John Osborne's preoccupation has been with the lone voice crying in the wilderness. But this first effort ends on a note of moral whimper: George Dillon, the *artiste manqué*, surrenders to the debilitated values of the telly-gooping, woman-dominated petty bourgeoisie, and accordingly dirties up his play for the provincial box office. Jimmy Porter, however — the second of the author's obvious *personae* and the archetypal Osborne hero — makes an advance, albeit a small one into the realm of positives.

At the ending of *Look Back in Anger* we do not really feel that the Porter trumpeting has ceased. When Alison, propelled by her lost child, grovels in the glorious mud of Jimmy's prescription, her relationship with him is allowed to retreat into the world of bears and squirrels. This is surely but a temporary respite; the cycle will begin again. "Why *don't* we brawl?" says Jimmy to Cliff. "It's the only thing left I'm any good at." And he *is* good at it, even if Yeats did say it all before in two lines:

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Porter will not give in to the Establishment, to the fence-straddling Colonel Redfern, just as Archie Rice, *The Entertainer*, rejects the phoney beneficence of brother Bill. In these two plays self-expression is beginning to find its feet, if not its podium. The ubiquitous hog of the social dirt-track renders it a point of integrity for Archie to entrench himself in the grubby slophouse of an exhausted music-hall. Failure is the only thing worth living for, the only basic certainty in a world picture devoid of value,

composed by a motion painter with the biceps of an all-in wrestler and the colour sense of a newt. Archie doesn't "give a damn about anything, not even women or draught Bass"

In *Luther* self-expression leaps from music-hall stage to pulpit. The play for television, *A Subject of Scandal and Concern* (November, 1960, B.B.C.) was clearly a preliminary exercise for the new play. History provided the case of George Holyoake, the last person to be imprisoned for blasphemy, in what Paul Slickey is pleased to call "this island of phlegm." Holyoake is something new in Osborne: no mere brawler, he is a man taking a moral stand against the forces of malicious stupidity, and in the trial scene his long speech of defence foreshadows Luther's self-justifying oratory at the Diet of Worms.

Young Martin Luther enters the Augsburg Convent of the Augustinian Order of Eremites to escape from himself. The Rule is a protection against the demands of a personality in which the body figures large. The futility of this attempted self-burial is magnificently pointed in the confession scene at the beginning of Act I. The petty confessions of the Brothers ("I have failed to rise from my bed speedily enough") throw into Technicolor relief the thoroughbred humanity of Martin's Freudian sweat. ("There is no security," he is soon to proclaim from the pulpit.) This scene is, in a way, a sum of Osborne's message to date, conveying as it does a disgust with mankind for cleaving to his tatty flannel (the armed forces have a word for it), for refusing to cope honestly and intelligently with his own problems and for stubborn blindness to the needs of others.

"And so the praising ended — and the blasphemy began." But what precisely is the nature of Luther's blasphemy? Is it blasphemy only from the point of view of a man like Cajetan, the papal legate, or is this a derogatory comment on a religious outlaw obsessed with his anus and a desire to re-enter the womb? Is the Protestant religion being shown up as a kind of Excremental Vision?

I lost the body of a child; and I was afraid, and I went back to find it. But I'm still afraid. I'm afraid, and there's an end of it! . . . There's a bare fist clenched in my bowels and they can't move, and I have to sit sweating in my little monk's house to open them. The lost body of a child, hanging on a mother's tit, and close to the warm, big body of a man, and I can't find it.

His marriage to the Roman matriarch provides an object lesson in incompatibility and it is important to note that this is clearly shown long before Martin's attack on indulgences. The spiritual criminality of a Tetzl merely lends opportunity for the subconscious dam to burst into violent articulation. Self-expression breaks through the barrier at last.

At the end of the play, Martin finds himself mid-point between two extremes: the blunt heritage of Hans, his father ("There's only one way of going 'up you' to Old Nick when he does come for you and that's when you show him your kids") and the absolutism of the established church. The tragic element lies in the failure immediately to forge a new order as firmly grounded as the old, out of the chaos of the peasant risings. The warning signal comes from Cajetan:

You know, a time will come when a man will no longer be able to say, 'I speak Latin and am a Christian', and go his way in peace. There will come frontiers, frontiers of all kinds — between men — and there'll be no end to them.

This splendid insight elicits a sympathy for Cajetan similar to that evoked by Colonel Redfern and, to some extent, Billy Rice. One in the eye for those who regard Osborne as nothing more than a snappy, toy-size mongrel, hellbent on nipping everything and everyone representative of "the Establishment".

The Knight rounds on Luther and, branding him with the blood of Müntzer, accuses him of betraying the peasants. All manner of doubts crowd in on the Reformer and, as he mounts the pulpit to give his reply, it comes to him that there is always new and necessary suffering. His wallowing in the nether pain and insistence on excremental analogies for Scripture are bound to alienate us at several points in the play; but the conclusion, where he speaks to his son of hope even in the hour of darkness, is both fitting and moving. It is a positive ending in so far as it re-establishes Mr. Osborne as a co-admirer with William Faulkner of the "agony and sweat of the human spirit".

The play is too long. We are aware of this particularly in the scene between Martin and his father, the rather heavy dialogue with Staupitz in Act Two, and the perplexing scene between Martin and the Knight in Act Three. This last is necessary dramatically but it doesn't jell in the theatre, although a reading of the play clears up the difficulties of argument. Nevertheless, the work is, as a whole, too uniformly prolix, too "operatic" to be first class theatre — a Shaw-Brecht cocktail which doesn't quite take.

W. Price Turner

Jumping To Conclusions

*The legs of a stone spider
 cannot support its weight.
 Love's debris is riddled
 with lesser sphinxes.
 To live with the primitive bitch
 of human folly is to relish
 the chill joke of mortality.
 Who expects beauty lagged
 in lank pagodas of underwear?
 Emblems of sustenance congeal
 on the rainbow wiped plate.
 Stone birds crash and crumble.
 Truth, with the desperate ache
 in its jaws, to bite deep
 and grip, selects a victim.
 As the wings stiffen and fail,
 as grit assails our meagre holdings,
 sanctioned ugliness
 overwhelms its auspices.
 How much dirt can lungs take?
 Orpheus, in dark glasses,
 homeward plots his wary way,
 where Medusa hulks by the fire,
 rattling her teeth, picking
 her nose, and reading a comic.
 Let civilisation answer
 for its monsters, or to them.
 The dusty pythons of habit,
 discarded tyres there's no budging,
 swell in our passages,
 a government surplus.
 Security darkens
 to fossil piety:
 see Atlantis.
 So ravage the moon.
 A sneeze still blasphemes at science,
 and logic is too great a burden
 for imagination to bear.*

Limits

*In a wheel of wire,
dodging the chop of the bar
as it whirls to a blur,
scampers the hamster.
A tonic character,
when games of freedom pall
he makes an ambling check
along metal boundaries,
as if walls or wires could vary like himself
in his amazing range of posed resemblances,
from squirrel minus the pride of tail
to pygmy rabbit lacking vulgar ears,
or, his cheek pouches ruffed and packed,
lion without the tiniest of roars.*

*Solemn and comical
when he sits up slitting a seed
like the emperor of mice
vamping a harmonica,
and still furry comedian as he clings
and gnaws at glinting struts
that chill his jaws, the little bulk
hefted slack to a stickle will,
he dangles dedicant
to this gripping cause, ringing
a skittling drill in persistent
ditto of gritty wrangles, while
his frolic rump bumps as he grinds
with cha-cha-cha revels in the sawdust.*

*Determinist, when you step off
the table's cliff
we field you with relief,
rewarding you with a stiff
sentence to serve our peace.
But now, peanut hugger, when you blink
plaintively from your rampart bed,
I see you as mute metaphor for the heart
we fear to liberate: delegate
for all vulnerability hoarding sustenance,
like love itself, in daylight camouflage
and night manoeuvres. I dreamed I kicked
my treadmill planks apart, and waking heard
Scramster the hamster pedalling in the dark.*

OBSERVATION DECK

Last month *Poetry* (Chicago), edited by Henry Rago, began its Golden Anniversary year. The significance of this lies not so much in the fact that it is the oldest magazine of its kind in history, nor that it introduced the work of such unknowns as Pound, Eliot, Joyce, Lawrence, Stevens, Frost, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, nor that it has for fifty years consistently published the finest British and American poetry being written, but that it has perhaps never been better than it is now under Mr. Rago. ● Cyril Connolly in *The Sunday Times*: "the true function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece". ● When Conrad Aiken's superb *Selected Poems* was published recently in England it met with a lukewarm reception from most of the younger critics, men who began writing criticism under the sway of Eliot and Pound. Once upon a time, forty-seven years ago, Conrad Aiken managed to persuade a young man named Eliot to show his poems to a young man named Pound. ● One of America's most skilled poets was finally captured in hardcover last month when Macmillan released *Nude Descending A Staircase* by X. J. Kennedy. ● Music lovers may now view Wagner's letters to his seamstress and the "Secret Red Book" of Paganini at the Library of Congress, Washington. Also exhibited are original manuscripts of Beethoven's Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109, Brahms's Third Symphony, Mendelssohn's Octet, Op. 20, and Mozart's Violin Concerto in A major, along with others by Bach, Bartok, Debussy, Haydn, Liszt, Prokofiev, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Schoenberg, Schumann, Sibelius, and Stravinsky.

(cont.)

Guinness commissioned twelve poets to write poems for this year's Poetry at the Mermaid in London; they were Thomas Blackburn, Austin Clarke, Michael Hamburger, Ted Hughes, Patrick Kavanagh, Norman MacCaig, Richard Murphy, Sylvia Plath, William Plomer, Hal Summers, R. S. Thomas, and Laurence Whistler. ● It is rumoured that Iris Murdoch's best writing is not to be found in any of her novels, but in the January '61 number of *Encounter*. Someone ought to check on this. ● Grove Press is publishing this month an edition of the selected poems of Pablo Neruda, the most influential poet now writing in Spanish, in a translation by Ben Belitt. ● Observing *The Observer* . . . Edmund Tracey: "Hans Hotter is the only man I have ever seen on the stage who can make me believe that he is God". A. Alvarez: "R. S. Thomas is the opposite of Aiken". Alan Pryce-Jones: "It is hard to know what to say about Norman Mailer". ● While Jane Esty and Paul Lett were gathering together the best poetry available for the October issue of *Mutiny*, Houghton Mifflin published *Best American Short Stories, 1961*, which listed for distinguished mention nine out of the ten stories which appeared in *Mutiny* last year.

The Epistemology of Loss by Frederick Eckman is the next of Felix Stefanile's Vagrom Chapbooks. ● On the 6th and 7th of next month the Dublin Gate Theatre will present Orson Welles's adaptation of *Moby Dick* in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress. In the same auditorium four days later Hugh Miller, Senior Director of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, will give a dramatic reading entitled "A Drama Recital". ● Archibald MacLeish in his recently perpetrated *Poetry and Experience*: "The crime against life, the worst of all crimes, is not to feel". (Perhaps this is proof that we descended from the apes . . . or perhaps it is proof that we are still descending.) ● The Autumn issue of *The Tulane Drama Review* is devoted to the theatre of Brecht, and includes five articles by the playwright himself, his play *The Seven Deadly Sins of the Lower Middle Class* translated by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, and articles by Kurt Weill, Max Frisch, and Eric Bentley.

(cont.)

● The W. H. Smith & Son Annual Literary Award of £1,000 has been presented to Nadine Gordimer for *Friday's Footprint*.

W. H. Auden has congratulated Oxford for having "anything so comically absurd as a Chair of Poetry". Robert Ranke (*Goodbye To All That*) Graves is the new Professor of Poetry and all that. Oxford deserves to be congratulated again. ● The complete fiction works of Anais Nin are now available from Alan Swallow. ● James Liddy, from his vantage point on the fifteenth page of the October *Hibernia*, suspects "Something is rotten in the culture of Ireland". ● Robert Vlach is the new editor of *Books Abroad* (University of Oklahoma Press). The last issue of outgoing editor W. Bernard Fleischmann featured a brief but valuable survey of contemporary lyric poetry in Spanish. ● One of the freshest and most intelligent studies of Shakespearean tragedy, *The Story of the Night* by Dr. John Holloway, is to be published this month by Routledge and Kegan Paul. ● Interviewed in *Trace*, Mark Van Doren replied forthrightly to a question of unguessed import: "I see no connection between free verse and outer space".
